

Message Text

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SAN JOSE, JULY 14--THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ISSUED A FINAL STATEMENT BEFORE ADJOURNING AFTER A TWO-DAY MEETING TO PROTEST THE UNESCO INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE ON COMMUNICATION POLICIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBXN. EXCERPTS FOLLOW.
"ALTHOUGH THE IAPA HAD BEEN ASSURED BY UNESCO AUTHORITIES THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF ONE OF ITS SO-CALLED GROUPS OF "EXPERTS"--PARTICULARLY DISTURBING RECOMMENDATIONS, BECAUSE THEY PROPOSED STRICT CONTROLS AND PROGRESSIVE STATE OWNERSHIP OF THE PRESS--WOULD NOT BE PART OF THE WORKING DOCUMENTS OF THE SAN JOSE CONFERENCE, THIS EMERGENCY MEETING WAS CALLED BECAUSE THE IAPA WAS STILL CONCERNED OVER THE WAY UNESCO VIEWS THE FIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.

EVEN THOUGH THE PROPOSALS BY THE EXPERTS PROPOSING RIGID MEASURES OF CONTROL AND STATE OWNERSHIP HAVE BEEN REJECTED OR REPUDIATED, THE WORKING DOCUMENTS OF THE SAN JOSE CONFERENCE SHOW THAT UNESCO HAS
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CHANGED ITS TENJONCY TO RECOMMEND OFFICIAL POLICIES

THAT COULD UNDERMINE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. THE HIGHEST
AUTHORITIES OF UNESCO HAVE REPEATEDLY STATED THEIR
INTENTION TO LIMIT OR UNDERMINE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.
IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
MEANS ONE THING TO UNESCO AND ANOTHER TO THE IAPA.

UNESCO'S INTERPRETATION OF THAT RIGHT MEANS, FOR
EXAMPLE, THAT THE ROLE OF THE PRESS SHOULD BE FRAMED
BY--AND CONSEQUENTLY SUBJECTED TO--THE GOALS OF
DEVELOPMENT, AS DEFINED BY GOVERNMENTS. IT MEANS,
FINALLY, THAT FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION SHOULD BE
RESTRUCTURED, WITH THE PRETENSE OF ATOJPNUOOIHNAW,(6-48, 5#-5 *)92 5
#-5 28)) 04953:5 5#3 :7)574-) 8\$3,5856
9* :97,5483 . THESE IDEAS HAVE BEGUN TO HAVE
CAPTIVATING APPEAL TO CERTAIN GOVERNMENTS AND HEADS OF STATE,
SOME OF WHICH ALTHOUGH DEMOCRATIC AND POPULARLY ELECTED, HAVE
NOT HESITATED TO ACCEPT THEM.

FOR THE IAPA, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS THE FREE AND
SPONTANEOUS INTERCHANGE OF PLURALISTIC IDEAS AND
INFORMATION OF ALL ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL TENDENCIES.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION CAN SURVIVE AND FULFILL ITS
SOCIAL ROLE ONLY IF IT IS KEPT TOTALLY FREE FROM ALL
GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE OR ANY OTHER KIND OF INTERFERENCE.
IT IS PRECISELY THE GOALS OF DEVELOPMENT THAT SHOULD
BE AIREN AND DEBATED WITH FULL FREEDOM BY THE NEWS
MEDIA, BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING MAGIC OR DOGMATIC IN
THEM AND PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLANS BY THE
VARIOUS SOCIAL SECTORS CANNOT IMPLY ANY THREAT OF
COERCION OR RESTRICTION OF THE INDEPENDENT PRESS, MUCH
LESS BY THE GOVERNMENTS, BECAUSE THIS WOULD MEAN
HANDING OVER CONTROL OF THE MEDIA TO GOVERNMENT.
THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE COMMUNICATION POLICY, IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE COUNTRIES OF THIS
CONTINENT, WOULD BE FOR THE GOVERNMENTS TO ABSTAIN FROM
EXERCISING ANY FORM OF VIGILANCE OR CONTROL OVER THE
CONTENT OF DISPATCHES, THAT IS, OVER THE FREE FLOW OF
IDEAS, NEWS AND OPINIONS, WHETHER NATIONALLY OR INTER-
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NATIONALLY, WHICH TODAY COME FROM SO MANY VARIED SOURCES.

THE ALLIANCE OF AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENTS OF THE
RIGHT AND THE LEFT, ALONG WITH THE UNPRECEDENTED
SUPPORT OF SOME OF THE FEW DEMOCRATIC REGIMES REMAINING
IN THE AMERICAS, SHOWS THAT WE FACE A SITUATION OF
EXTREME GRAVITY.

THE IAPA, IN ITS DEFENSE OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION,
WILL NOT REST IN ITS TASK OF MAINTAINING ACTIVE
VIGILANCE, BECAUSE IT BELIEVES THAT FREEDOM OF
EXPRESSION HAS NEVER BEFORE BEEN AS THREATENED AS
IT IS NOW IN SUCH AN INSIDIOUS AND SUBTLE MANNER.
AND WE KNOW OUR CONCERN IS SHARED BY THE WORLD PRESS
FREEDOM COMMITTEE, WHICH HAS THE SUPPORT OF TWELVE
LEADING JOURNALISTIC ORGANIZATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.
WHATEVER COMES OUT OF THE SAN JOSE CONFERENCE, THE
IAPA WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT WITHOUT QUARTER AGAINST
ALL FORMULAS OR POLICIES THAT MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED
BY ANY GOVERNMENT TO RESTRICT THE RIGHT OF THE
PEOPLE TO BE INFORMED BY A FREE AND INDEPENDENT PRESS."
THE REMAINING PORTION OF THE STATEMENT DEPLORED THE
LATEST RESTRICTIONS ON PERIODICALS IN PERU AND CALLED
ON THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT TO LIFT THEM.
THE IAPA SENT THE FOLLOWING CABLE TO JULIO SCHERER,
DIRECTOR OF EXCELSIOR: "WE ARE CONCERNED OVER PRESS
REPORTS INDICATING THAT OUTSIDE FORCES INTERVENED
IN THE INDEPENDENT LIFE OF EXCELSIOR. WE THEREFORE
ASK YOU TO INFORM US IN DETAIL WHAT OCCURRED. PLEASE
LET US KNOW ALSO IF THIS ORGANIZATION CAN CONTRIBUTE
IN ANY WAY TO THE STRENGTHENING AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE
MEXICAN PRESS."
STOLZENBACH

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